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## BRINGING AUTUMN INTO THE HOME LANDSCAPE

### 1. Foliage

If you have wanted to introduce autumn interest into your home landscape and have not known exactly how to go about doing it, the following suggestions relative to plant material suitable for the purpose should be helpful in planning effective compositions.

It should be understood, first of all, that autumn interest subjects are not limited to one class of plants alone, trees, shrubs, vines, garden perennials, wild flowers and even the native grasses and ferns, all having latent potentialities ready to be put to use. Neither is a beautiful landscape dependent upon the contributions of a single interest group. It is rather the skillful combining of plants with such features as attractive leaf coloration, persistent or evergreen foliage, showy fruits and late flowers which assures the most interesting results.

Which plants one selects and uses depends, of course, upon the space available, the immediate surroundings, architectural and otherwise, the limitations of the site with respect to soil, drainage and exposure, and the personal likes and dislikes of the owner.

What more logical nucleus for an autumn composition than a tree or group of trees with spectacular foliage color? For, whether used alone as a specimen or several together in a mass planting, trees give the landscape its color dominance. Many have foliage coloring worthy of mention, but for practical purposes let us limit our selection to a few of the very best. Maples rightfully belong on any selective fall color list, especially such trees as the beloved Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*), with leaves of gold, orange and red, the Red or Swamp Maple (*Acer rubrum*) whose flaming hues of scarlet, crimson and purple brighten lowlands and moist hillsides, often times before other coloring occurs, the stately Miyabe Maple (*Acer miyabei*) from Japan, with leaves of clear gold, and the lower growing (to 25 ft.), multiple-trunked Amur Maple (*Acer ginnala*), whose flamboyant color range is a medley of gold, scarlet and purplish-red. The oaks also have much to offer colorwise, the Scarlet Oak (*Quercus coccinea*) of sandy soils, whose highly polished leaf

blades turn to the most brilliant shade of scarlet found in the genus, the deeper toned, more blood-red Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*), fast growing species of shapely pyramidal growth habit with a preference for moist locations, and our common White Oak (*Quercus alba*), magnificent, widespreading tree with wine colored or orange-russet autumn garb. The little used, neatly oval Basket Oak (*Quercus prinus*), also has handsome color of orange-scarlet. Because it changes early to orange and russet with reddish undertones, why not consider the Ohio Buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*), the clear lemon-yellow hued Amur Cork Tree (*Phellodendron amurense*) or the purple or purplish-bronze toned American or White Ash (*Fraxinus americana*)? The symmetrically oval Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), is another excellent choice to introduce pure golden yellow into the planting, as is the lighter yellow Ginkgo or Maidenhair Tree (*Ginkgo biloba*). Unlike other trees, the Ginkgo frequently sheds all its leaves simultaneously, usually after a hard frost. One of the few Europeans to show good coloring, the European Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), retains its greenness until late, waiting until most other trees have become defoliated before assuming its subtle, but pleasing golden-russet aspect. Typical of the Asiatics, the Oriental Pears may also be expected to put on a fine show in autumn, when their leathery leaves turn purple, bronze and blood-red. The late coloring Chinese Callery Pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), its compact (to 20 ft.) variety (*P. calleryana faurei*), and the widespreading Ussurian Pear (*Pyrus ussuriensis*) (to 50 ft.) are among the best.

Among smaller trees, those most appropriate for landscapes of limited area, the choice is equally varied. Well at the top of the list not only for brilliance of color (yellow to scarlet to purplish-red, but for picturesqueness of habit as well, is the incomparable Sour Gum, Pepperidge or Tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*), whose mere presence can lift any landscape from mediocrity. Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), is another fine subject, one combining good color with pleasing form. Yellow, burnt-orange, terra cotta and scarlet in both pure and intermediate tones are included in its color palette. Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*), hardy here if northern grown stock is used, and a light sandy soil provided, furnishes autumn interest of the same high calibre as the spring floral display. For the foliage color range embraces scarlet, crimson and purplish-red enhanced further by even brighter red fruit. Anyone acquainted with this dogwood is aware of its distinctive habit of growth—horizontal branches arranged in flattened tiers. Although of more subtle coloration, the terra cotta tones of the multi-trunked Juneberries or Shadblows (*Amelanchiers*) are also useful in the autumn scheme. Against the pure gold of birch or tulip they are striking. The Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) warrants mention as well, because of its golden, heart-shaped leaves and the pronounced contrast they afford with the very dark trunks. Recognition must also be given our native Blue Beech or Hop Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), that multi-trunked, understory tree with smooth, gray, fluted or muscular bark. It is a study in coppery-orange at the height of its fall foliage change, livening shaded areas with its brightness. A chrysanthemum variety, 'Apricot Glow' is of similar coloring, and as it reaches full bloom simultaneously, results in a combination everyone finds charming. The glorious blending of

yellow, orange and scarlet marking the autumn foliage change of the American Smoke Tree (*Cotinus americanus*), likewise justifies its inclusion among the desirables. Its leaves are considerably larger and bolder in texture than those of the Common Smoke Tree and the growth habit of the plant itself more narrow-headed.

Any landscape without at least one hawthorn or flowering crabapple is inconceivable, and while primarily fruiting subjects, there are among them a number with good foliage color as well. As examples we may cite two particularly choice ones, the Japanese Zumi Crab, (*Malus zumi calocarpa*), whose leaves turn gold and sometimes orange, and a lesser known Halls Crabapple variety, *Malus halliana spontanea*, introduced from Japan in 1919. The latter is an interesting twiggy plant whose leathery foliage puts on a purplish-red and scarlet display of exceptional brilliance. There are two hawthorns notable also for their fall foliage change, the Washington Thorn (*Crataegus phaenopyrum*), columnar tree with persistent Chinese red fruit and lustrous 3 to 5 lobed leaves which turn purplish-bronze and gold, and the round-topped Lavalley Thorn (*Crataegus lavalleyi*), with long clinging, leathery leaves of bronzy-green.

Good fall color shrubs are legion, but it is unnecessary to try and incorporate them all into the planting plan. A few of the better ones used for accent near shrubs with persistent green leaves make for lively contrasts. To many, fall color and Euonymus are synonymous, for it is the unique rose-pink of Winged Euonymus (*Euonymus alata*) and the eye-catching red of its compact variety (*E. alata compacta*), which outclass all shrubs in brilliance. That is, almost all, for the Shining Sumac (*Rhus copallina*) runs them a close second. The latter, a thicket-forming blood-red shrub of light, acid soils becomes a scarlet conflagration in early October. Picturesqueness of line combined with gracefully poised, finely cut foliage of glowing orange and scarlet typifies another interesting member of the genus, the Cutleaf Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina laciniata*). 'Japanesque' most adequately describes its appearance. Lower growing Fragrant Sumac (*Rhus aromatica*), is also colorful, its smaller, three-parted leaves assuming yellow, orange-red and purplish tones. A fine low shrub (to 5 ft.) for facing taller plantings. A planting without at least one of the Viburnums would be unthinkable. Favorites here are the Southern Blackhaw Viburnum (*Viburnum rufidulum*), with highly polished, leathery leaves of scarlet and blood-red, the native Nannyberry (*V. lantago*), known for its purplish coloration and the Smooth Withered (*V. nudum*), shiny-leaved shrub turning bright scarlet. In shade, the acid loving Mapleleaf Viburnum (*V. acerifolium*), is well worth knowing about, its small, maple-like leaves ranging from ivory through pink, red and purple.

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(To be continued)





Sugar Maple, *Acer saccharum*, Marsh., one of the handsomest trees for autumn foliage color.

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